United Nations A/63/PV.36

# General Assembly

Sixty-third session

*Official Records*

**36**th plenary meeting
Monday, 3 November 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

*President:* Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda items 40 and 44**

**Report of the Economic and Social Council**

**Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/63/3)**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/371)**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/255)**

**Draft resolution (A/63/L.14)**

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/83)**

**Draft resolution (A/63/L.15)**

**The Acting President**: In connection with agenda item 40, I would like to remind the members of the General Assembly that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2008, to consider agenda item 40 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative, programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider item 40 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of chapter I of the report that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committees concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Léo Mérorès, President of the Economic and Social Council, to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

**Mr. Mérorès** (Haiti), President of the Economic and Social Council (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the 2008 report of the Economic and Social Council (A/63/3). The Council's substantive session in July took place at an important juncture. It was a transition year for the Economic and Social Council, which has now operationalized many of the new functions given to it by the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in particular the biennial Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) and the annual ministerial review of the implementation of the international development goals.

Today, allow me to briefly highlight the key outcomes of the Council's work so far and then to focus on the future, including the steps forward. We began the year with the annual special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade

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Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The meeting made an important contribution to the preparations of the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, which — as we all know — will be held in Doha, Qatar, from 29 November to 2 December 2008.

Turning now to the high-level segment, the 2008 Development Cooperation Forum, including its series of preparatory meetings, was, in the view of many, a success. Given the broad mandate, an important objective of the preparations for the first Forum was to establish the Economic and Social Council as a principal forum for political dialogue and policy review on the effectiveness and coherence of international development cooperation. Another objective was to contribute to the outcome of key intergovernmental processes, such as the upcoming Doha Review and the recently concluded Accra High-level Forum. Those objectives have been achieved, and the Accra Agenda for Action reflects several of the policy messages of the Development Cooperation Forum.

A number of factors account for the preliminary success of the Development Cooperation Forum, including the perceived quality of the high-level symposiums held under the auspices of the Forum, the professionalism and political balance of the analytical work, including the Secretary-General's report, the ability to attract key development cooperation actors and the strong public support from stakeholder groups, such as parliamentarians, civil society and local governments. Indeed, the Forum is seen as having established a comparative advantage in organizing multi-stakeholder consultations on aid issues.

While progress has been made in building political support for and ownership of the Forum by the whole range of stakeholders, the Forum also faces several challenges. One is to strengthen the distinct identity of the Forum as a leading global forum for dialogue among senior policymakers dealing with development cooperation at the country level.

A related challenge is to further raise awareness of the Development Cooperation Forum among practitioners at the country level, especially since adding experiences from the local level to the debate at the global level is a particular comparative advantage of the Forum.

It is important that the preparations for the 2010 Forum further strengthen its contribution to international development cooperation. An important recommendation of the 2008 Forum was that it should play a key role as an international mutual accountability mechanism that would draw together analysis of progress in national and global-level mutual accountability processes. For the 2010 Forum to be able to advance the global dialogue on this important issue, it is important that member States and other stakeholders actively participate in the upcoming preparatory process.

The 2008 annual ministerial review focused on sustainable development, which encompasses economic growth, social development and environmental protection. It helped spur the efforts of countries to implement the global consensus on sustainable development at the national level and provided practical guidance to assist in those efforts. The annual review also served to advance the ongoing work on climate change, which was also bolstered by the climate change and development event organized in the run-up to the substantive session. This meeting discussed ways on how developing countries can cope with climate change and how to reduce the world's carbon footprint.

The national voluntary presentations during the annual review continue to be seen by member States as a very important mechanism for strengthening accountability for fulfilment of development goals. This year brought presentations from developed countries, namely Belgium, Finland, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, which discussed lessons from their development policies and programmes. Chile, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania shared both their success stories and the specific obstacles to implementation at the country level. The success of the annual review as a collaborative review mechanism is reflected in the large number of volunteers for 2009 and 2010.

The impact and visibility of the high-level segment were enhanced by an extensive series of side-events, such as the annual ministerial review innovation fair and ministerial breakfasts and panel discussions organized by member States, entities of the United Nations system and non-governmental stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. Together, those meetings served to promote and

catalyse tangible, multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementing the international development agenda.

The 2008 high-level segment concluded with the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration. It underscored the need for urgent, collective and collaborative action by all members of the international community to address global financial turmoil, rising food and fuel prices, environmental degradation and climate change.

Many other outcomes of the Council's substantive session are of key relevance to the work of the General Assembly. They will assist, I am sure, the Second and Third Committees in their work.

First, the Economic and Social Council is entrusted with the follow-up to the implementation of the General Assembly resolution on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations system. As called for by the Council, the United Nations system is now proceeding with the implementation of the Assembly's resolution on the policy review, and the resolution adopted by the Council this summer gave new impetus to these efforts.

Secondly, member States recognized and encouraged the ongoing strengthening of humanitarian coordination, particularly in partnerships, funding and leadership capacity on the ground and of mainstreaming gender equality in humanitarian assistance. Member States have underlined the importance of national capacity-building, disaster-preparedness and risk reduction, and have strengthened legal disaster relief frameworks. Member States also reacted to the reality on the ground by condemning the increased attacks against humanitarian personnel, urging the persecution of perpetrators.

The Council has now started to convene emergency sessions, such as the one on the global food crisis this year. The time may have come to adopt a regular practice of turning to the Council whenever major emergencies occur. The Council organized a meeting on the food crises, which was very well attended.

Thirdly, the Council's role in peacebuilding and post-conflict development was also recognized and received unwavering support from member States. The extension of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti is a manifestation of the confidence that member States placed in the Council's role of supporting a country's long-term development.

The Council's informal discussion on possible modalities of interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, using the framework of the work of its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, generated a general consensus on the need to further explore how to bring development work into the Peacebuilding Commission and how to bring the peace and security dimensions of peacebuilding into the work of the Council. In my view, the time has come perhaps to clarify the relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Council and to define the modalities for their interaction.

The Council intends to expand the range of stakeholders that the United Nations can partner with in promoting the implementation of the internationally agreed developments goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its philanthropy event discussed how corporate philanthropy can contribute to advancing the MDGs, especially for sustainable development. The Council intends to further expand its outreach to the philanthropic community and could continue discussions how to facilitate the growth and flow of philanthropic resources on a global basis and the possible establishment of a United Nations Philanthropy Day as a way to mobilize interest and support for philanthropy worldwide.

My experience as President of the Economic and Social Council has shown me that the convening power and the spirit of engagement that have been the hallmark of the United Nations conferences are well captured in the Council. The Council has opened new vistas of cooperation among various stakeholders. I find this to be an encouraging sign. The Council has great potential for becoming the forum for promoting collaborative action in the pursuit of current crises. I urge the Assembly to utilize this potential to the fullest.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Antigua and Barbuda to introduce draft resolutions A/63/L.14 and A/63/L.15.

**Mr. Ashe** (Antigua and Barbuda): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group wishes to thank the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/63/83 and we also welcome the report just

introduced by the President of the Economic and Social Council and contained in document A/63/3. During this year's substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", ministers pointedly recognized that the international community was meeting at a critical juncture in our efforts to realize these goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and that we faced multiple challenges in our efforts to achieve them.

Back then in July, less than four months ago, some were still sceptical about recognizing the looming turmoil in financial markets as a crisis, preferring instead to use the anodyne terms "instability" and "uncertainty". In the short space of time since then, the world has come to recognize the financial situation for what it is: a crisis. The crisis in international financial markets has now permeated the global economy, significantly slowing global economic growth. This, added to the food crisis and rising fuel prices, as well as the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change, means that urgent individual and collective actions, both short- and long-term, are needed to curtail the impact on development and to ensure that development gains are not reversed and future efforts are not undermined.

Our ministers expressed determination to take concerted action to promote progress towards the realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in the face of those overwhelming risks to development. We certainly hope that the strong political will that is required will be demonstrated in a timely fashion.

In the face of such challenges, development remains a central goal in and of itself, and sustainable development, in its economic, social and environmental dimensions, constitutes a key element of the overarching framework and purpose of the United Nations. During the Council's discussions on various economic and social issues, the Group of 77 and China identified several areas where progress was lacking and which we deemed vital for development and for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

There is general agreement that global challenges such as climate change and the environmental crisis, the global food crisis, the financial crisis, the energy crisis and the crisis in international policy and institutional infrastructure — which bear disproportionately on developing countries and the poor — have to be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner. They cannot be sequenced and have to be addressed with urgency. The international community has the framework of the MDGs and the other internationally agreed development goals around which to rally efforts. But actual implementation actions remain woefully lacking. There is now an opportunity for extraordinary responses from the international community. But the window of opportunity is closing very fast and will be lost, if we are not swift to respond concretely and instead carry on with the status quo.

As we continue to examine and assess the role of the United Nations system in ensuring a coordinated implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels, the Group of 77 and China continues to stress the need to ensure a strong and direct link between coordination and development effectiveness. The outcome of increased coordination should be tangible and measurable development results where they matter most. We should therefore place priority on monitoring results at the country level.

We remain convinced that the United Nations is the best intergovernmental forum for advancing the development agenda and for facilitating the full realization of all internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. On the very important factor of policy coherence, the United Nations, through the Economic and Social Council, has a key role to play in ensuring that the policies of developed countries and international institutional partners are coherent and consistent with development goals and objectives of developing countries, particularly policies on trade, finance, intellectual property and the transfer of technology. Such inconsistencies should be the subject and object of deliberations of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, so that they may be identified and corrected.

The Group of 77 and China reiterates that securing real progress on MDG 8, on the global partnership for development must become a priority. The importance of benchmarks, and targets under MDG 8 cannot be overemphasized, as global partnership is necessary to achieve all internationally

agreed development goals and the MDGs. The General Assembly should make this message abundantly clear.

Additionally, there remain many challenges to the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance activities, both in natural disaster situations and in complex emergencies. These include addressing such situations in a timely, safe and effective manner. A single natural disaster can set back development progress in a developing country by several decades, accentuating poverty and economic vulnerabilities. For these reasons, it is critical that affected States, donor countries, the United Nations system and other humanitarian organizations coordinate to provide the much-needed humanitarian assistance and development support while recognizing the primary role of the affected State and fully respecting General Assembly resolution 46/182.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China hopes that the international community and development partners will take urgent measures to address the significant and debilitating implementation gaps identified in several areas, in particular in technology transfer, food security, agriculture and rural development, trade policies including agricultural subsidies, debt and official development assistance.

I wish now to take this opportunity to introduce the two draft resolutions that are before the Assembly. The first is the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.15, entitled "Commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development".

Next year, 2009, will mark the fifteenth anniversary of that landmark international conference on population and development, which was held in Cairo. Fifteen years later, the international community is well poised to note achievements, assess progress and identify shortfalls in the achievement of International Conference on Population and Development goals. In this regard, I am pleased to introduce, on behalf of the Member States that are members of the Group of 77 and China, the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.15, entitled "Commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development". The draft resolution proposes that the General Assembly devote one day during its sixty-fourth session to a commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Group thanks all delegations for their support of this draft resolution and looks forward to a fitting commemoration of the International Conference on Population and Development plus 15.

Permit me now to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.14 entitled "Smoke-free United Nations premises". By its decision 2008/231, the Economic and Social Council recommended that the General Assembly, at its sixty-third session, consider the recommendation set out in Council resolution 2006/42 of 27 July 2006 on the implementation of a complete ban on smoking on all United Nations indoor premises, at Headquarters as well as at regional and country offices throughout the United Nations system, and the implementation of a complete ban on sales of tobacco products on all United Nations premises.

In this regard, I am pleased to introduce, on behalf of the Member States that are members of the Group of 77 and China, draft resolution A/63/L.14, entitled "Smoke-free United Nations premises". The Group thanks the many delegations that have participated in the consultations on this resolution, especially the delegation of Uruguay for conducting those consultations on behalf of the Group. We are heartened by the overwhelming support among all States for this resolution, and we look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Before action is taken on the draft, there is one small correction to be made. In operative paragraph 3, the words "the measures for" should be inserted after "report on". Paragraph 3 should now read:

> "Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the measures for the implementation of the present resolution."

Finally, the Group of 77 and China looks forward to adoption by consensus of both draft resolutions, and we thank all delegations for their support.

**Mr. Delacroix** (France) (*spoke in French*): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union on agenda item 40, on the report of the Economic and Social Council. The countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro; Iceland, member of the European Free Trade Association and

the European Economic Area; and Ukraine and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

The European Union thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the activities of the Economic and Social Council (A/63/3). We would also like to congratulate the President of the Council, Ambassador Mérorès, for the great expertise and benevolent authority with which he steered the Council's work in the last few months. The European Union takes this opportunity to renew its support for the Economic and Social Council. The recent introduction of the annual ministerial review and the holding this year of the first Development Cooperation Forum have had a very positive impact in terms of strengthening the Council, in line with the desire expressed by the heads of State and Government at the World Summit in September 2005.

The first Forum took place during the Council's high-level segment and was able to play an important role as a setting for constructive dialogue within the United Nations on the key issues of cooperation and development, including South-South cooperation and aid effectiveness. It facilitated the review of trends in international development cooperation, the identification of gaps and the making of recommendations to formulate and implement national development strategies. The European Union is convinced that the Forum can make a key contribution in its capacity as a preferred entity for examining aid architecture, encouraging dialogue and strengthening coordination among all relevant actors, including emerging donors, particularly to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

In order to boost the Forum's efficiency and allow interactive discussion on cooperation and development issues, the European Union believes that two or three specific themes should be identified, which would enable the Forum to draw up a factual assessment, highlight the elements of coordination to be improved and identify best practices on the ground.

The role of the Development Cooperation Forum was recognized in the Accra Agenda for Action on aid effectiveness, and we hope it will contribute to international dialogue and mutual accountability on the issues related to aid, in the spirit of the global partnership to which the European Union is particularly committed.

The role of the Annual Ministerial Review held during the Council's high-level segment is also very important. The European Union supports its goal of reviewing progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of conferences and summits and their follow-up processes. It welcomes the smooth running of the second session of that voluntary exercise, on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", which contributed to the formulation of lessons learned and best practices on that issue.

The European Union will be just as mobilized for the 2009 Annual Ministerial Review, which will focus on the theme of "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health". The European Union stresses in this regard that its States members rank among the largest contributors to the health-related activities of the United Nations system, in particular the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It also welcomes the contribution of developing countries in presenting lessons learned from their progress in implementing internationally agreed development goals. In that regard, it recalls the need to maintain an appropriate balance between the numbers of developing and developed countries that volunteer for national voluntary presentations. That balance must take into account their respective representation in the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations.

The European Union considers further reform of the Economic and Social Council's working methods to be paramount in view of enabling the Council to refocus on its core functions and to assume its full role of guiding and coordinating international action in the economic, social and environmental arenas. In particular, the European Union believes that an even better organized and focused substantive session would clearly be a guarantee of coherence and effectiveness.

Finally, the European Union would like to reiterate the importance that it accords to achieving increased coordination and complementarity among United Nations activities, in particular as regards the necessary links between the work undertaken by the Economic and Social Council and that of funds and programmes, between the Council's work and that of the General Assembly.

**Ms. González** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the context of the consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council and draft resolution A/63/L.14, on a smoke-free United Nations premises, Uruguay's delegation wishes to align itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China. My delegation wishes to reiterate once more its support for the draft resolution on smoke-free premises, a continuation of the work initiated by the Economic and Social Council in July with the adoption of decision 2008/231, which recommended that the General Assembly implement the Council's resolution 2006/42 of 27 July 2006.

My country attaches particular importance to that issue. For that reason, we have made a firm commitment to anti-tobacco policies, at the international level, by ratifying the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and also at the national level, by implementing correspondent policies that seek to improve the well-being of its population. In 2006 my country became the first in Latin America to be totally free of tobacco smoking in closed public areas.

In that regard, we feel it is appropriate to recall that the consumption of tobacco is unquestionably a risk factor for health and a cause of death, in addition to being associated with all sorts of diseases ranging from cancer to cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases, as noted by the report submitted to the Economic and Social Council by the United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control.

Tobacco affects not only smokers. Second-hand smoke is damaging to health. Our delegation believes it is the responsibility of all in the Organization to protect against exposure to tobacco smoke in public places, especially in indoor work spaces and closed public premises. The majority of States Members of the Organization have adopted and encouraged smoke-free policies, and the United Nations and Governments should set an example in public health. Reducing the smoking areas in the workplace protects staff members and delegates from involuntary exposure to smoke and aids smokers in reducing their daily consumption. In view of these facts, we believe that the Organization should act and it is thus essential that the General Assembly take prompt action on this matter so that we can have a smoke-free United Nations.

**Mr. Alimov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council for his very informative presentation of the Council's report (A/63/3). I would also like to convey our gratitude to the Secretariat for ensuring the Council's ability to work effectively during the course of this year.

The Russian delegation has consistently championed the strengthening of the role of the Council within the framework of the United Nations development system and the global economic architecture as a whole. We view the Council as one of the leading platforms within the framework of the universal Organization to seek compromise solutions to the most pressing socio-economic problems of today, including re-emerging threats and challenges to consistent sustainable development. The Council's updated, more flexible and more focused format and its demonstrated ability to rapidly respond to new threats and challenges have provided the Council with the opportunity to become one of the most utilized mechanisms for multilateral cooperation for development, including in the context of the task of overcoming the global financial crisis.

The successful conduct of the second annual ministerial review of the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and of the first full-scale Development Cooperation Forum allow us to speak of the Council as having fully achieved its intended operational level in implementing its mandate as the main body in the United Nations system ensuring coordination of multilateral efforts aimed at achieving the MDGs. Of special importance here was the Development Cooperation Forum. In our view, the Forum, on the whole, discharged its main function to serve as a universal platform for equal partnership dialogue on issues of development with the participation of as broad a range of partners as possible, including civil society and the private sector. A priority task is the search for the best work format for the Forum to enable it to genuinely promote greater agreement on and the effectiveness of development processes. The interactive discussion within the framework of the Forum must be targeted at elaborating concrete recommendations and compromise decisions, which may serve as the foundations of future intergovernmental agreements.

One of the ways to strengthen the role of the Council is the more effective use of the potential of the Council's annual sessions to implement its coordination functions. We believe that the

coordination segment should become the main platform for a practical, focused and grounded consideration of the issues of the work of regional and functional commissions of the Council, including the format for the dialogue with their Executive Directors, as well as the topic of the comprehensive implementation of the decisions of major United Nations summits and conferences in the field of economics.

We welcome the outcomes of the operational segment of the session, whose work is of major importance from the point of view of implementing agreements achieved within the framework of triennial reviews of substantive activities, which give the United Nations practical policy guidance in the field of cooperation for development and which turn United Nations programmes of work and funds at the country level.

The humanitarian segment confirmed the growing importance of a timely and appropriate response to natural disasters of increasing frequency and severity. The Council fully retains its role as the main platform of work within the framework of the United Nations for consideration of humanitarian issues. We are, however, forced to note that the fact that the Council had to vote on a humanitarian resolution this session — the first time in its history — creates a very dangerous precedent and points to an undesirable trend towards the politicization of humanitarian issues at the United Nations. The Council should continue to play a role in considerations aimed at finding responses to such global challenges threatening progress in achieving the MDGs, such as the food crisis. We back the efforts of the United Nations system to overcome it. We believe that the Rome Declaration and the Comprehensive Framework for Action worked out by the High-level Task Force can serve as a sound basis for consolidating the efforts of the international community in this area.

The high-level segment of the upcoming the Council session, will, as is well known, be devoted to assessing progress in the implementation of objectives and obligations agreed at an international level in the field of health. The President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session of has declared the topic of global health as one of his priorities. Russia supports increased attention devoted to health issues on the Organization's agenda. However, we urge that their consideration in various United Nations forums over the coming year should take place in a consistent, coherent manner following a single line of logic, and with consideration by the Council as a central element. We expect that the organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations, coordinated by the Council, will, in a timely fashion, start preparations for Council sessions, including at a regional level. Russia is ready for constructive cooperation in this field with all interested partners.

**Mr. Voto-Bernales** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express my thanks for the report introduced by the distinguished representative of Haiti, Mr. Mérorès, and to pay tribute to his skilful guidance of the Economic and Social Council as its President.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Two years have elapsed since the adoption of resolution 61/16 on strengthening the Economic and Social Council, which established, among other things, two elements that my delegation regards as fundamental to improving the work of the Council: on one hand, substantive annual reviews at the ministerial level and, on the other, the Development Cooperation Forum.

We welcome the holding in July of the first meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum, at which time the President of the Council said that the launching of the Forum was a significant milestone in the implementation of the global partnership for development as, for the first time, international development cooperation issues as such will be discussed under the aegis of the United Nations by the Economic and Social Council in order to strengthen the impact of cooperation for development.

In this regard, I would like to underscore a number of points that we regard as key for this work to proceed effectively. The Forum should further strengthen the voice of all those concerned, including civil society, parliamentarians, the private sector and local government, through support for high-level dialogue on the main issues of cooperation for development. Due consideration must be given to the broad range of topics affecting the efficiency of cooperation for development, such as climate change, food security and policy coherence. The Forum should continue to provide independent high-quality analysis on the topic of cooperation to ensure a broad and inclusive international debate on that agenda. The

Forum should play a key role as an international mechanism for accountability, bringing together analysis of progress achieved on the national and global levels as related to the topic of mutual accountability, thus contributing to donor-beneficiary coordination.

Another key event at the July meeting was the thematic debate entitled "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current challenges", at which my country raised a number of points that it would like to reiterate in this forum.

Like climate change, protection of biodiversity is a long-term global issue that is not being handled effectively and is closely associated with sustainable development. In that regard, we need to heighten awareness of the problem and increase the number of international programmes promoting technical and financial assistance for the protection of biodiversity.

The rules and incentives established by markets in the developed countries to mitigate the effects of climate change can at times hamper some exports from developing countries. For that reason, technical and financial assistance is needed, so that the developing countries can upgrade their manufacturing plants, so as to comply with those new and more stringent requirements.

The current regimes of intellectual property rights need to be reviewed to take into account the interests of developing countries. We are particularly concerned about the protection of traditional knowledge.

In the private sector of developing countries, limited access to credit and technology can hinder investment in cleaner and more efficient production depending on resources and the establishment of new companies that contribute to sustainable development. In that regard, we must support not only the large corporations, but also individual initiatives and small business, which is essential to developing countries.

As a result, we underscore the importance of initiatives, such as that of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, co-chaired by the former Secretary of State of the United States of America, Ms. Madeleine Albright, and Mr. Hernando de Soto, who delivered the report of the Commission on 3 June 2008 and to which we believe all necessary support should be offered.

Just 10 days ago, thanks to the endorsement of our region, my country had the honour to be elected as a member of the Council for the period 2009 to 2010. We are excited to return to the Economic and Social Council, since the work of that body relates closely to the outlook and priorities of Peru's foreign policy.

Together with the impetus given to economic growth by investment and the generation of employment — goals towards which we are working hard — fighting against poverty and exclusion is currently probably the most daunting challenge of Peru's national and foreign policies. We are convinced that the dignity of the human being and his well-being lie at the core of our concerns.

In that regard, I would like to put forward two brief thoughts of a general nature about the work of the Council.

First, we need to refocus the work of the Council. As His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI pointed out when he last addressed the General Assembly: "The founding principles of the Organization ... express the just aspirations of the human spirit and constitute the ideals which should underpin international relations" (*A/62/PV.95, p. 3*). In that regard, the work of the Council should focus on the human being and make the individual the core of its actions and the purpose of all goals.

Secondly, to put it plainly, we believe that we need more action and less rhetoric. It is not so much a question of creating new commitments as fulfilling those already made. That needs the establishment of flexible and effective follow-up mechanisms in all the Council's areas of activity.

**Mr. Sen** (India): I am grateful for the opportunity to express our views on the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2008 (A/63/3). India attaches great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council, and believes that its strengthened structure will assist in better discharging its role as the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. We underline the importance of the new mandate, given to the Council in 2006, to undertake a regular and periodic review and assessment of international economic and development policies and their impact on development. We support the Development Cooperation Forum as a key body in

overseeing trends in international development cooperation.

Insofar as the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2008 is concerned, we would like to comment on the report of the Statistical Commission on its thirty-ninth session (E/2008/24), which was considered by the Economic and Social Council during its 2008 substantive session. While the Statistical Commission was asked merely to look at the indicators for the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we would like to reiterate our position and place on record that we do not agree with the change in targets effected last year by the United Nations Secretariat, particularly the transfer of a target from Goal 8 to Goal 1. Such actions, without the approval of Member States, are arbitrary and misrepresent the decision taken at the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Further, those actions weaken the monitoring of MDG 8 and are against the spirit of the global partnership for development. We would therefore urge the Statistical Commission to focus particularly on that aspect during its fortieth session.

**Mr. Murakami** (Japan): Today, it is my pleasure to share Japan's position under agenda item 40, on the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/63/3), and agenda item 44, on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields (A/63/83).

First of all, I would like to express my delegation's sincere gratitude to the Secretariat for providing those reports. I would also like to join previous speakers in praising Ambassador Mérorès, President of the Economic and Social Council, for his skilful and successful leadership of the Council this year.

On 22 October, with the endorsement of the regional group, Japan was re-elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for the term from 2009 to 2011. My delegation would like to express its sincere gratitude to all the Member States that supported our re-election. We are committed to continue playing an active and constructive role in the deliberations of the Council.

Japan attaches great importance to the activities of the Economic and Social Council. During the high-level segment of the substantive session this year, the then Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Yasuhide Nakayama, declared that Japan supported the efforts to strengthen the Council, including the establishment of the Development Cooperation Forum. Japan not only financially supported the preparation process of this year's Economic and Social Council, but also sent panellists to its meetings to share their views.

Japan has announced its intention to make a national voluntary presentation at next year's annual ministerial review in Geneva. Under the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health", Japan will present its unique experience in enhancing public health domestically, as well as its recent role as a strong advocate for the promotion of global health.

The high-level meeting on Africa's development needs and the high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals in September provided an ideal opportunity for world leaders to send a strong message that we should act together to make strong efforts for the development of Africa and the achievement of the MDGs. For its part, Japan placed the MDGs at the top of the agenda at the two important summits it hosted earlier this year, namely, the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) and the Group of Eight (G-8) Summit.

The fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which took place in Yokohama in May this year, was co-organized by Japan, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Representatives of 51 African countries, including 41 leaders, along with other donor countries and a wide range of international organizations, gathered to rally behind the theme "Toward a vibrant Africa", or, in French, "Vers une Afrique qui Gagne". They reaffirmed the importance of developing country ownership and international community partnership in advancing development. They also emphasized the need to accelerate broad-based economic growth, to ensure human security including achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the consolidation of peace and good governance and to address environmental issues and climate change.

At the Group of Eight (G-8) Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July, leaders declared that, in tackling the MDG agenda, they would work to improve human security through the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities. In its discussions, the G-8

focused on the areas of health, water and sanitation, and education. In the field of global health, the G-8 emphasized the importance of pursuing a comprehensive approach in order to strengthen health systems, improve maternal, newborn and child health and combat infectious diseases. At the successful MDG Partnership event on water and sanitation on 24 September, Japan announced its determination to put even greater effort into enhancing good water cycle management. With regard to education, Japan emphasizes the importance of improving both the quality and quantity of basic education as well as of developing a well balanced and holistic education system, including secondary, higher and technical and vocational education and training. All of these policies came with specific commitments, which Japan announced earlier this year and reiterated at the high-level event on the MDGs. Japan is determined to work steadfastly in order to fulfil these commitments.

In the fight against climate change, the G-8 leaders sought to share with all parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change the vision of the goal of achieving a reduction of at least 50 per cent in global emissions by 2050. They also emphasized the importance of midterm goals and national plans, and shared the view that sectoral approaches are useful tools for achieving national emission reduction objectives.

Japan stands ready to continue to provide leadership towards the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustained economic growth through the enhancement of human security. My delegation hopes that fruitful discussions at the United Nations will lead to concrete actions towards the achievement of these goals.

**Mrs. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan): At the outset, allow me to express some words of appreciation to the President of the Economic and Social Council for his report and to the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16".

We believe that the progress made in the implementation of resolution 61/16 since its adoption is accurately reflected in the report. The report contains a number of important recommendations for further action to promote an integrated and coordinated approach to the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in economic, social and related fields. It concerns, first of all, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely, poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. We should realize that our eventual success in attaining those goals will be achieved through cross-sectoral interaction, as well as through the mobilization of resources and maximization of support from various constituencies in the development process.

The delegation of Kazakhstan would like, in particular, to emphasize the role of the General Assembly in ensuring overall monitoring and oversight of the implementation of decisions taken in global multilateral forums. We note with satisfaction that, in accordance with the relevant recommendations of resolution 61/16, the Economic and Social Council was strengthened during the reporting period in its role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination of the process of integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

As a member of the Economic and Social Council, Kazakhstan would like to note that the Council successfully finalized its multi-year programme of work based on a focused and balanced list of cross-sectoral thematic issues common to the outcomes of global multilateral events. The multi-year work programme is helping the Council to achieve greater coherence and effectiveness in the exercise of its managerial and coordination responsibilities.

The new Economic and Social Council functions, such as the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum, constitute the central pillars of a revitalized Council and have been significant strides in positioning the Council as the principal forum for global dialogue and reviewing policy regarding the effectiveness and coherence of international development cooperation. The results of the various conferences and follow-up processes are brought together in an integrated manner at the annual ministerial review. This year, during the second annual ministerial review, Kazakhstan conducted its national voluntary presentation on its progress in the implementation of the MDGs. During the preparatory process, which gave the Kazakhstan Government the

opportunity to once again look critically at the progress made towards attaining the MDGs, national MDG benchmarks were set, higher than those agreed upon at the global level. In this regard, my delegation would like to express deep gratitude to experts from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and to the Council secretariat for providing technical assistance in the course of those preparations for the presentation.

The first ever Development Cooperation Forum brought together representatives from Governments, the private sector, intergovernmental organizations and academia to discuss technical aspects of development cooperation issues. It was truly a historic session, which implemented the new functions of the Council in their entirety. Further evidence of the Council's leadership role in the development area is the launch, during the previous session of the Council, of the global debate on the consequences of economic insecurity caused by the overlapping food, fuel and financial crises, in search of an appropriate response. This is a truly global forum in which the world can unite in order to, among other things, reinvent the global financial architecture.

We welcome the ongoing involvement of functional and regional commissions in the review of their working methods, priorities and programmes, taking into account the multi-year work programme of the annual ministerial review, in order to better pursue the implementation of the outcomes of various global events. Recognizing the instrumental role of regional commissions in maintaining the focus on the implementation of the outcomes of the various conferences within their respective purviews, my delegation calls on member States to support the proposal to open sub-regional offices of regional commissions, particularly the joint office of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in North Central Asia, which will bring the Council closer to beneficiary countries.

One of the central events of this year in the United Nations was the high-level event in the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals to assess the achievements made at the midpoint towards 2015.

In view of the slowdown in the process of implementing the MDGs within the defined time frame, governments and business and civil society partners made new commitments in the amount of $16 billion to help meet the MDGs. Implementation of additional development programmes will require additional efforts by development partners.

Therefore, we encourage the Economic and Social Council, its functional and regional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to gear their deliberations and workplans towards making significant contributions to that process. This concerns primarily the Economic and Social Council high-level segment with the Bretton Woods institutions in 2009, periodic sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the review meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development. We also hope that the outcome of the Doha Round of negotiations at the end of this month will contribute to accelerating progress towards the development goals.

My delegation would like to reiterate Kazakhstan's adherence to its commitments to the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. We also express our conviction that the Economic and Social Council, as one of the main organs of the United Nations, should continue to play a critical role in ensuring steady progress towards forging a global partnership for development.

**Ms. Legarda** (Philippines): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Philippines and to state for the record that the Philippines aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Philippines also wishes to commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on agenda item 44, entitled "Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16" (A/63/83).

As an immediate past Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, the Philippines has been in the privileged position of actively participating in the revitalization of that important organ of the United Nations. In the same manner, it continues to contribute to the work of the various functional Commissions of which it is a member.

On substantive matters, the Economic and Social Council annual ministerial review's focus this year on sustainable development showed much overlap with the Philippines' positions on cross-cutting issues such as the food crisis, climate change and the gender gap, which were reported on during the Commission on Sustainable Development's meeting last May — all aspects of which add to the challenges already faced by developing countries in meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

The Philippines has taken the position that greater focus should be concentrated on adaptation than on mitigation. Adapting to climate change requires reducing underlying vulnerabilities, building response capacities and managing climate risks. Two weeks ago, parliamentarians from countries vulnerable to climate change gathered in a consultative meeting in Manila, Philippines, and came up with The Manila Call for Action of Parliamentarians on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. This representative was privileged to be a co-convener with the United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The Philippines, together with those countries will also look into compliance by our respective Governments with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, the guide for effective disaster reduction at the national level, which 168 countries adopted in 2005.

It is now high time to review legislative progress pursuant to the Hyogo Framework for Action, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Bali Action Plan. Accordingly, the Philippine reiterates the parliamentarians' entreaty to the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to commence the process of transforming the Hyogo Framework for Action into an internationally binding legal instrument. The Philippines is convinced that that would strengthen our commitments and ensure the realization of the goals and objectives of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The Economic and Social Council special meeting on the global food crisis was one of the very first discussions on the problem and one that led to the high-level meeting in Rome and the eventual finalization of the Comprehensive Framework for Action.

Whereas 30 years ago we were one of the biggest exporters of rice, we are now one of the world's largest importers of rice and the Philippines remains critically engaged in efforts concerning the food crisis. During the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Philippines highlighted the fact that the World Economic Forum ranked the Philippines as the only Asian country in the top ten on the global gender gap index — an achievement that reflects progress in narrowing the gender gap. However, that is not reflective of the vulnerability faced by women in the face of the current global financial crisis.

On procedural matters, it has become apparent that all of the major global crises that have made the headlines over the past year — the food and fuel crises, climate change and environmental degradation and most recently, the financial crisis — are within the purview of the Economic and Social Council. Those crises pose grave threats to the achievement of all internationally agreed development goals and in particular the Millennium Development Goals.

The number and severity of the global crises challenge the United Nations system and challenge all United Nations Member States as well, in terms of trying to find quick, coherent, comprehensive and coordinated responses to the multidimensional and often interrelated effects of those problems.

The Philippines supports taking a closer look at the utility of reporting triennially on efforts to reduce the amount of work that may not have any useful outcome.

Finally, on a personal note and speaking as a member of the Philippine Senate — the Upper House of the Congress of the Philippines — let me underscore the report's recommendation on the conduct of the Economic and Social Council Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) that,

> "The inclusion of civil society organizations, parliamentarians as well as local government and private sector representatives provides for a unique opportunity to garner a wide range of inputs for a deepened dialogue on the future of international development cooperation." (*A/63/83, para. 68*)

There is much merit in that recommendation. I believe that the development pillar of the United Nations must be pushed forward on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, as it is only in that manner that we can actually ensure that policy recommendations,

negotiated resolutions and programme implementation can have any real meaning to the ordinary person.

**Mr. Dapkiunas** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): This year has been a difficult one for the international community. The weakness of existing coordinating mechanisms for economic development at an international level has led to the emergence of a multifaceted global crisis in energy, food and finance. Countering that crisis, as shown by the results of the interactive discussion of 30 October, will be impossible without radical reform of the existing system of international financial institutions, in whose activities the principles of the free market often take precedence over ensuring the sustainable development of individual States and the conditions for sustainable development of the global economy as a whole.

In that respect, we should welcome the efforts of the Economic and Social Council to conduct a review of the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the convening in 2008 of a series of special sessions and meetings with the participation of the heads of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. Those events allowed us to better understand the nature of those crises, identify their origins and forecast their short and midterm impacts on various States. We believe that the practice of convening such events should continue.

Belarus has consistently advocated enhancing the role of the Economic and Social Council as a specialized body to resolve global economic problems. Similar to the Security Council, which is a body whose mission is to respond to threats and challenges to international peace and security, the Economic and Social Council must become the centre for coordination of the international community's efforts to respond to global challenges in its area of competence. In that respect, we believe that the Economic and Social Council should, as rapidly as possible, convene a high-level meeting to consider ways to overcome the financial crisis. We welcome that the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review have been mainstreamed into the activities of the Economic and Social Council. However, further steps in that direction will be needed.

The questions of assistance to middle-income countries should be included in the framework of the fight against the consequences of the financial crisis. We call upon the international community to step up international cooperation in providing that group of States with technical assistance, in order to provide them with the broadest possible capacity to independently elaborate and implement sound and effective strategies for their development.

**Mrs. Wahab** (Indonesia): Indonesia would like to thank the Secretary-General for the reports contained in documents A/63/3 and A/63/83. We also join previous speakers in thanking the President of the Economic and Social Council for his leadership.

Indonesia also aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Indonesia welcomes the General Assembly's continued focus on integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to, the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. As emphasized in paragraph 151 of the World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), the General Assembly should strengthen its relationship with other principal organs to ensure better coordination. In paragraph 155 of the same document, the Economic and Social Council was called upon to ensure follow-up of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the internationally agreed development goals.

The Economic and Social Council's launch of the annual ministerial review and Development Cooperation Forum in 2007 contributed to those interrelated objectives. The annual ministerial review and Development Cooperation Forum are important to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system and its impact on development. More importantly, both forums bridge the divide between the normative and operational work of the United Nations. That thus helps close the implementation gap.

The measure of success for both entities rests on two achievements. First is their impact in enhancing the integration of the international development agenda in the programmes of work of United Nations system entities. Second is their effectiveness in providing coherent support to the implementation of national strategies.

In that connection, Indonesia is pleased that a multi-year programme of work has been adopted for the annual ministerial review. Organizing a different

thematic area each year provides a clear structure for the deliberations. Furthermore, it facilitates better assessment of the role of the annual ministerial review. It also mobilizes the engagement of the functional commissions.

Likewise, the first biennial meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum in New York this year also provided clear policy direction regarding the Doha Review Conference and the 3rd High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held at Accra.

Those measures, in Indonesia's view, provide a constructive contribution to the Council's role as the principal body overseeing the overall implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

In the implementation of the multi-year programme of work of the annual ministerial review, Indonesia commends the programmatic contributions of the functional commissions in regard to the themes. Their input towards this year's annual ministerial review theme, "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", showed their commitment to this process. It is commendable that their efforts are being attuned to current challenges. The particular focus in most of the commissions in regard to climate change is encouraging.

It is important that the regional commissions continue to contribute the efforts of their member States to meeting the internationally agreed development goals. The regional commissions need to align their programmes of work with regional priority areas. Therefore, strengthening their capacities by working together with the Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs becomes imperative.

While acknowledging the positive developments of the Economic and Social Council, we cannot fall into complacency. It is important to continually promote policy coherence at all levels. The link between the global policy debate and national activities should be strengthened.

At the international level, the contribution of the functional commissions is still ad hoc. There needs to be a clear and systematic way of contributing to the annual ministerial review while not overlooking the priorities of their respective programmes of work. Likewise, the United Nations system's current effort to enhance coordination through closer interaction between the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the newly constituted Chief Executives Board structure and the executive boards of the funds and programmes could help ensure effective support for the implementation of conference commitments.

At the national level, the effort of the United Nations through the "One United Nations" approach is a positive step towards integrated follow-up of the United Nations conferences and summits. We should build on the lessons learned. In terms of reporting, the recommendation to triennialize the report on the integrated follow-up merits further consideration. However, it may be more valuable to follow the timing of the current Economic and Social Council restructuring. It is worth considering biennial reports to conform with the work of the Development Cooperation Forum and to ensure timely assessments.

**The Acting President**: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda items 40 and 44.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/63/L.14 and A/63/L.15.

We turn first to draft resolution A/63/L.14, entitled "Smoke-free United Nations premises". I draw the attention of the members to the fact that the asterisk in the line of sponsors should appear after Antigua and Barbuda. That correction, where necessary, will be reflected in the addendum to the document.

Before proceeding to take action on draft resolution A/63/L.14, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution the following countries have become sponsors: Argentina, Finland, France, Ireland, Israel, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.14?

*Draft resolution A/63/L.14 was adopted* (resolution 63/8).

**The Acting President**: We turn next to draft resolution A/63/L.15, entitled "Commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development".

Before proceeding to take action on draft resolution A/63/L.15, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.15?

*Draft resolution A/63/L.15 was adopted* (resolution 63/9).

**The Acting President**: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 40 and 44.

**Agenda item 114**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations**

**(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**Draft resolution (A/63/L.7)**

**(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**Draft resolution (A/63/L.9)**

**(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**Draft resolution (A/63/L.12)**

**(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States**

**(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Eurasian Economic Community**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**Draft resolution (A/63/L.13)**

**(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System**

**Draft resolution (A/63/L.10)**

**(n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(o) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/155)**

**(p) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe**

**(q) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States**

**(r) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(s) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**(t) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/156)**

**Draft resolution (A/63/L.11)**

**(u) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228)**

**Mr. Tóth** (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization): I have the honour to report today on the status of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and on the progress achieved by the Treaty's Preparatory Commission. The CTBT is an essential pillar of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It was built on strong foundations and it continues to grow in strength every year.

The history of the United Nations and the General Assembly cannot be written without mentioning the efforts that have been made, and continue to be made, to secure international peace and security. These efforts have gone hand in hand with significant attempts to control and one day eliminate from our lives the imposing reality of nuclear weapons.

The comprehensive ban on nuclear weapon testing that was negotiated by the Conference on Disarmament in the 1990s and the subsequent efforts to prepare for that ban reach back to the very first resolution of this Assembly. In January 1946, the Assembly's first session adopted resolution 1(I): "Establishment of a Commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy". The Commission was given the task of making specific proposals on the exchange of scientific information for peaceful ends, the control of atomic energy to ensure its use for peaceful purposes, the elimination of atomic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and the provision of effective safeguards to protect States against the hazards of violations and evasions.

In the course of the 62 sessions of the Assembly and the 62 years that have followed, many noble and effective proposals have been made and implemented. The CTBT, with its ban on nuclear testing, its comprehensive and global verification regime and its open dissemination of the scientific and technical information gathered is one endeavour that has met that early Commission's terms of reference in full.

In its most basic form, the CTBT is a ban on all nuclear testing, for all people, for all time. The Treaty foresees the establishment of a global and democratic verification regime to monitor compliance with the Treaty's provisions. In 1996, the year the Treaty was opened for signature, a Preparatory Commission was established to build the verification regime in anticipation of the Treaty's entry into force, while at the same time promoting the Treaty and its principles so that the system could one day be put to work properly.

But, in fact, the verification system has already been put to a test. Two years ago, I stood before the Assembly in the shadow of reports that the then eight-year moratorium on nuclear weapon testing — the longest silence in the history of nuclear weapon explosions — had been broken. The announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it had conducted a nuclear test on 9 October 2006 cut to the core of the CTBT's purpose and mandate.

I reported to the Assembly then on the challenge that event posed for the nascent verification regime and how it met this challenge successfully when it detected the event and attributed it to the Democratic People's Republic. That event was some 20 times smaller in yield than the nuclear explosion that took place over Hiroshima.

At a time when the verification regime was in provisional operation and the International Monitoring System was only half complete, it was an unwelcome challenge. But the silver lining was that the Treaty's verification regime proved itself and has since spurred its members to greater action.

At the request of the Secretary-General, the United Nations system is undertaking significant efforts to present to the international community a coordinated and effective approach to addressing the challenge of climate change. The Preparatory Commission, with its cutting edge technical and scientific capabilities, may have a substantial contribution to make to this effort.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) is uniquely placed for this task, with an international monitoring system spanning the globe and observing the atmosphere, oceans, landmasses and all that rests between. The purpose of this wide-scale environmental monitoring is to ensure compliance with the Treaty's provisions. But, by its very nature, it can be adapted for other purposes.

In the past two years alone, the system has grown exponentially, and 70 per cent of the 337 facilities to be built across the territories of 89 countries are complete. The global communications infrastructure — the communications lifeline supporting the system and comprising 250 terminals networking the globe — has been completely revamped just in the past 12 months. The existing system, with the multiplicity of technologies it supports, could prove a highly effective and efficient means of generating valuable climate-related information directly.

The network could also potentially support sensors co-located with our monitoring facilities and targeted specifically at the global climate change problem. Approximately $1 billion have been invested in the system by its members over more than a decade. The system is truly unprecedented in its global reach, with facilities located in some of the harshest yet most relevant environments. This is a significant asset of the international community, one that has definite potential to help us address global climate change issues successfully.

There are other potential civil and scientific applications to which the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's verification regime can be put to use. As we have developed and improved the system, interest in it has grown. That interest has led to other avenues for which the data we are generating can be put to use, such as tsunami warning alerts. People naturally want the best and we can provide the fastest, most reliable and highest quality data.

Following extensive cooperation with UNESCO, agreements for the provision of data for tsunami warning purposes have recently been signed with institutions in Australia, Japan and the Philippines. More are to follow with Indonesia and other countries. Important life-saving applications of the Treaty's verification regime are already being put to use. Plenty more could follow.

A great distance has been travelled by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization since I last stood before you. In the changing global context of the twenty-first century, this Treaty is now more necessary than ever. A verification regime, unprecedented in scope and ambition, is coming to life. As we assemble here today, it is waiting. It is a massive human and financial investment, a great endeavour of scientists and Governments alike, waiting to enter into full operation because that is what it was built to do and that is what it stands ready to do.

However, all of this is for naught if we cannot bring this Treaty into force. The Preparatory Commission is now a 180-member-strong organization. We are five ratifications away from crossing the 150-ratifications barrier. It would seem that all roads lead to the universalization of the CTBT and its principles. And yet, because of the Treaty's own built-in mechanisms, there are still nine countries whose ratification is necessary for this Treaty to enter into force. Consequently, we are kept at the gate.

I say that this Treaty is now more necessary than ever. This is not simply rhetoric. Gaps have developed in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In the barriers erected to protect us from nuclear weapons, we are not living up to the resolve with which our predecessors first convened, united in their common aim of delivering us from the threat posed by the discovery of atomic energy. We have lost the sense of urgency.

When we consider the myriad challenges before us today, the argument for establishing this Treaty immediately in the international rule book proves more compelling than ever.

Concerns about energy security are moving alternative energy solutions to the forefront. So too is the potential threat posed by climate change, as its effects become more apparent in our daily lives. The potential resurgence of nuclear energy rests at the crux of these two defining issues on the international agenda. Nuclear energy may well be about to witness a renaissance.

Such a resurgence will almost certainly lead to an increase in the number of countries, facilities, institutions and individuals managing sensitive components of the nuclear fuel cycle. Such a surge across the board will make it more difficult than ever

to differentiate between prohibited and permitted nuclear activities. We are moving in a direction where the choice between nuclear energy for peaceful purposes or nuclear energy for weapons will be based more on political grounds than on technical ones.

As nuclear energy is promoted to address energy security and climate change challenges, this promotion must go hand in hand with a strengthening of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime — a regime that has been weakened in recent years. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is the last and most visible legal and technical barrier to the development of nuclear weapons. It can keep the disarmament and non-proliferation regime from unravelling, as we progress through the twenty-first century and attempt to navigate the compound challenges facing our world and as we learn the lessons of the current global economic crisis. These challenges must not be left unattended; they must not be left to unregulated competition and market forces for an adequate response; they require even more regulation than other volatile areas of our daily lives; they will not forgive complacency; and they must be faced promptly, decisively and collectively.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the efforts we are currently undertaking are steeped in the tradition of this body. That such tradition is important because it is the tradition of cooperation and collective responsibility. Nations assembled here 62 years ago and began that tradition in the General Assembly: to have disparate and diverse communities working together as one international community towards a common goal and with a common ownership of that enterprise and the fruits of that enterprise. Those efforts extend now to every outpost of human endeavour, including the exploitation of nuclear materials.

Undoubtedly, the most terrifying problem raised by the discovery of atomic energy was the realization of the capacity to destroy ourselves — to end human life on this planet. We are locked in a constant struggle to control that capacity, to see it diminish so that the positive applications of scientific thought and knowledge may flourish.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the global and democratic verification regime that it provides make us stronger. They give us the power to win that struggle. During the past 10 years the Treaty was repeatedly challenged by nuclear weapon tests and action putting at risk its eventual entry into force, and the number of ratifications grew from a mere 13 to nearly 150. During the same period a $1 billion verification regime was put in place. It happened not because of political myopia or abundance of resources. It happened because all those nearly 150 countries voted with their feet. It happened because all those countries put their money where their mouth is. It happened because they saw the clear and present difficulties but were determined to prevail.

The great act of this body, as it moves forward, must be to see the day when proposals to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy are no longer needed, because the problems have been solved and all that lies before us is opportunity and the freedom to pursue it in the absence of fear.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, to present the report of that organization.

**Mr. Pfirter** (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): I have the pleasure of addressing this Assembly under the agenda item entitled: "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons". Indeed, such cooperation is vital for peace and security through the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this common quest, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) plays its part by implementing its mandate of eliminating all declared chemical weapons and ensuring their non-proliferation through the tools of verification. The disarmament and non-proliferation regime established by the Convention has received consistent support both from the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) as well as from the United Nations. This has strengthened the hard-won norms banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

The annual report of the activities and programmes of the OPCW on the implementation of the CWC in 2006 (see A/63/155) and the draft report for 2007 have already been circulated to the General Assembly. As part of the continuing cooperation between the OPCW and the United Nations, I also had the opportunity of informing the First Committee on 15 October about the current state of implementation

of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Last year, United Nations Member States signalled their overwhelming support for the Convention at the high-level meeting convened in these premises to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Convention's operation. It was gratifying to witness such strong commitment to the Convention and the work of the OPCW. The adoption each year of a consensus resolution by the United Nations General Assembly, reaffirming the importance of the Convention, represents another concrete manifestation of such continuing support.

This year, our States parties met for the second 5-year Review Conference and reaffirmed unanimously their conviction regarding the validity of the Convention's objectives in the context of the goals of peace and security. The Conference stressed in particular that the Convention sets new standards for global disarmament and non-proliferation through verification in a non-discriminatory and multilateral manner. While affirming the importance of completing chemical disarmament within the given deadlines, the Conference equally underscored the need to strengthen the non-proliferation aspects of the Convention. It emphasized, in this context, the importance of effective national implementation of the obligations of the Convention as a means to both deter and punish misuse of toxic chemicals for any unlawful purposes.

The second Review Conference also recognized the important role OPCW can play in support of internationally agreed action against international terrorism. In this framework, it recalled the decision adopted by the Executive Council in December 2001 stressing the effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention. I wish to underline that this is entirely consistent with the objectives of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and that the OPCW is fully cooperating with the United Nations to promote effective implementation of that resolution.

The success of the second Review Conference bears eloquent testimony to the foresight and wisdom of States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Thanks to this spirit, the Convention remains a comprehensive and effective disarmament and non-proliferation tool that has demonstrably made a significant difference in advancing a system of security based on respect for rules that apply to all uniformly, with verification as the watchword.

Allow me to summarize the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I will also touch upon our future challenges.

As of 30 September 2008, the OPCW had verified the destruction of more than 28,600 metric tons of Category 1 chemical weapons. This represents 41.25 per cent of the total stockpiles declared by six States parties. In the two years since I last addressed the General Assembly, the amount of chemical weapons that has been destroyed has doubled. Also in this time, two of the six declared possessor States have completely fulfilled their destruction obligations under the Convention. They are Albania and a State party. They deserve the appreciation of the international community for reaching these milestones. And so does India, which is close to reaching this landmark. But, of course, the time remaining to accomplish the total destruction of declared chemical weapons by all possessor States is also growing short and a significant amount still remains to be destroyed.

The major burden of these obligations rests with the Russian Federation and the United States. The Russian Federation has to date completed the destruction of more than 11,600 metric tons or 29 per cent of its Category 1 chemical weapons. The commissioning of new destruction facilities, as well as the construction of additional ones, is proceeding apace. The authorities in the Russian Federation have been very clear in their pledge to fulfil their obligations under the Convention, within its time frame and in the manner mandated by CWC, and, as stated in a recent report submitted by the Chairman of the OPCW's Executive Council, they are taking concrete steps to that end.

The United States of America has completed the destruction of nearly 15,400 metric tons or 55.4 per cent of its declared stockpiles. New destruction facilities are under construction, which will add to the existing capacity of the United States to destroy chemical weapons, thereby further supporting the resolve of this State party to meet its obligations under the Convention. The United States has also provided critically needed assistance to other countries in their destruction efforts.

The United States and the Russian Federation have both shown resolve and transparency by hosting visits by delegations of the Executive Council to their chemical weapon destruction facilities. These visits

have enabled representatives of the Council to gain first-hand knowledge, both about the scale of the operations at destruction facilities and the overall magnitude of the undertakings of these two countries.

I reiterate my deep appreciation to both these possessor States for this firm commitment to uphold and fulfil their obligations under the CWC.

China and Japan, for their parts, have submitted reports on the progress made towards the destruction of all chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China. I wish to commend the exemplary cooperation between these two countries in dealing with this historical legacy and, in this regard, to reaffirm the readiness of the Technical Secretariat to provide all possible assistance. Indeed, we can all look forward to the early commencement of the process of destruction of these weapons.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is also making progress towards the elimination of its chemical weapons. The required processes, involving technical reviews and approval of relevant plans by the OPCW Executive Council concerning the destruction facility and activities, are expected to be completed soon. This will set the stage for the destruction of Libya's chemical weapons, so as to complete the process by 2011.

In terms of its security objectives, the CWC is both a disarmament and a non-proliferation instrument. Today we have in operation an effective and efficient industry inspection regime that is key to this non-proliferation effort and to the promotion of confidence among States parties in the chemical industry's legitimate and peaceful activities. Since the CWC entered into force in 1997, the OPCW has conducted almost 3,500 inspections at 195 chemical weapons-related facilities and over 1,100 industrial sites on the territory of all States parties. Over 98 per cent of the world's chemical industry is located on the territory of States parties to the Convention. I once again wish to acknowledge the support the chemical industry has shown for the Convention. This cooperation sustains the confidence in the exclusively peaceful purposes of its activities. However, it must be remembered that there are nearly 4,500 industrial facilities worldwide that are liable to inspections.

As the OPCW moves closer to the goal of the complete elimination of declared chemical weapons stockpiles, it is essential to evolve an industry verification regime that is responsive to the long-term validity of the Convention's non-proliferation objectives. That requires continued refinement and intensification of industry verification to ensure that all categories of relevant facilities, especially the category known as the "other chemical production facilities", are adequately covered under the verification regime.

While those matters are under active consideration by the OPCW's policymaking organs, the Organization's Scientific Advisory Board is engaged in matters that are no less important. There is an increasing overlap between the chemical and biological sciences and a fusion between them and information technology — trends that require close study to determine their relevance to the purposes of the Convention. Those potential developments call for a measure of readiness to adapt the verification regime of the OPCW to new challenges, so that it will continue to effectively serve the goals of the Convention.

Following the adoption of the Plan of Action regarding the Implementation of Article VII obligations, the promotion of effective national implementation of the Convention has remained a priority and represents a highly active programme area for the OPCW. The number of States parties that have enacted legislation covering all key areas had increased from 51 in October 2003 to 82 by 30 October 2008, and 126 States parties had informed the secretariat of the legislative and administrative measures that they had adopted. Of those States parties, 112 had submitted the texts of their adopted measures. The number of States parties that have designated or established a National Authority, which is a step required under the Convention, had increased to 177, or 96 per cent of all States parties.

It is through the establishment of the necessary administrative and legislative measures that States parties equip themselves to detect, pursue and prosecute any breach of the Convention by their nationals on their territory. The relevance of such measures to anti-terrorist efforts is obvious. With the domestic implementation of the CWC showing higher rates of compliance than comparable legal instruments, the OPCW has had its own successful experience and will continue to share it with others. That has been the case in the context of the regional and subregional outreach activities organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Security

Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). I note with satisfaction that the OPCW's contributions related to that Committee's work and experience have been found to be of particular relevance and utility to the United Nations.

Here, I wish to express my gratitude to members of the OPCW individually and to the European Union, acting in the framework of its Joint Actions programme, for having made available generous financial contributions that have sustained an extensive and productive programme of activities in support of the work of the Organization. Of course, this is true not only for programmes in the area of national implementation, but also for activities related to assistance, protection and international cooperation for peaceful purposes. The latter are particularly important for many member States whose economies are developing or in transition.

The delivery of emergency assistance in the event of an attack or threat of attack of chemical weapons has assumed considerable importance in view of the increase in the number of such threats from non-State actors. States parties are therefore keen to build their national capacities to deal with scenarios that may involve either the use of chemical weapons or the use of toxic chemicals as such weapons.

The OPCW regularly holds training courses in all regions of the world. They include programmes for emergency responders as well as field exercises for the delivery of assistance in cooperation and coordination with other organizations, including the United Nations. The next such exercise is scheduled to take place in Tunisia in 2010.

In the field of the peaceful applications of chemistry, OPCW programmes have seen both qualitative and quantitative enhancement, thus benefiting a growing number of qualified individuals, who return from those programmes better equipped to serve their organizations and countries. In that area, Africa receives special attention in terms of the allocation of programmes for and the sponsorship of candidates. For that purpose, the OPCW programme to strengthen cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention is making steady progress, with the cooperation of countries in the region.

An overwhelming majority of the members of the international community are now States parties to the CWC, thus lending to its prohibitions and norms the force of general international law. Adherence by 184 States in 11 years' time is a notable record. Yet, the Convention's objectives and purposes will not be fully realized until the remaining 11 countries Members of the United Nations have joined the Convention. I warmly welcome Iraq's decision to deposit its instrument of accession with the Secretary-General. Lebanon is also expected to do so shortly. That would leave only nine countries outside the jurisdiction of the OPCW. We expect some in that group of nine to accede to the Convention in the near future, as they continue to make tangible progress in their domestic preparations.

I would especially urge the remaining countries in the sensitive region of the Middle East to delink their consideration of joining the Convention from other political and regional issues. I welcome the ongoing interaction that we enjoy with Egypt and with Israel, which is a signatory State. Despite their reservations with regard to joining the CWC, they have not avoided constructive engagement. I hope to enter into similar discussions with Syria. I will continue to appeal to them to consider the benefits that their accession to the Convention would bring to the Middle East region in terms of building mutual confidence and promoting a positive assessment of prospects for peace and security in that part of the world.

It also remains my hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which until now has avoided any contact with the OPCW, will make some gesture towards discussing the issue of the abolition of chemical weapons. That would be a positive move in the context of promoting peace on the Korean peninsula and would be consistent with the requirements of Security Council resolution 1718 (2006), which, in addition to dealing with the nuclear issues, refers to the necessity of abandoning other categories of weapons of mass destruction in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

In conclusion, I would like to thank United Nations Member States for their continued interest in and support for the work of the OPCW. I am sure that they share my optimism about the future of an organization whose members have demonstrated great resolve and commitment in upholding the noble objectives of the CWC. Time and again, through their constructive actions and their spirit of consensus, they have raised multilateralism to an exemplary level. For its part, the Technical Secretariat remains fully

committed to the tasks that it has been mandated to perform.

The commonality of objectives between the United Nations and the OPCW, based on the ideals of the United Nations Charter aimed at a prosperous and peaceful world, reminds us of the importance of mutual cooperation and collaboration, which, I am confident, will strengthen further in the years to come.

**The Acting President**: I now call on the representative of India, who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.7.

**Mr. Natchiappan** (India): India, as President of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) for this year, is privileged to introduce, on behalf of its sponsors, draft resolution A/63/L.7 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.

The draft resolution, inter alia, notes the progress achieved in enhancing cooperation among the United Nations, its agencies, other international organizations and AALCO. It expresses appreciation for the work of AALCO with respect to issues such as combating corruption, international terrorism and the trafficking in women and children, as well as human rights issues. It also recommends that the consideration of this item be scheduled to coincide with the Sixth Committee's deliberations on the work of the International Law Commission with a view to promoting close interaction between AALCO and the Sixth Committee.

It may be recalled that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, as it was then known, was established to provide expertise in international law to Asian and African States, as well as specific assistance and advice upon request on any topic of international law. Such advice could be rendered in developing a suitable legal framework or legislation for implementation of international treaties or for providing a model agreement to establish joint cooperative arrangements, or as an opinion on a given subject to one or more member States.

Over the last 50 years, AALCO has acquired a unique stature in promoting legal cooperation among Asian and African States in the field of international law. Its annual conferences are major events in international law, and the New Delhi session in April this year was well attended by ministers and senior officers of member States, besides several observer delegations and representatives of international organizations. The exchange of views on contemporary issues of international law, including subjects being studied by the International Law Commission and those arising in connection with the implementation of the world trade regime, proved highly beneficial to participants.

Reports of AALCO and declarations adopted at its annual sessions have become an important source for the development of international law and are an expression of the views and interests of the Asian and African States. AALCO has been dedicating its efforts to identifying the common interests of Africa and Asia on a variety of contemporary issues before the United Nations and other world bodies, thus helping the evolution of a fair, just, equitable, universal legal order. These views were duly communicated by the Secretary-General of AALCO to the United Nations, at which it has the distinction of being an observer, and to the International Law Commission, whose sessions its Secretary-General regularly attends.

We would like to encourage AALCO to expand its activities by progressing on its several forward-looking plans for the benefit of its member States. In this regard, mention could be made of special training programmes for the promotion of teaching and expertise in legal advising in international law, the establishment of special chairs in teaching of international law in universities of member State, the offer of fellowships to Asian and African students to pursue higher studies in international law, and the encouragement for publication of books and periodicals devoted to the cause of international law that are of special interest to Asia and Africa.

Some of these activities can, however, be pursued only if more funds are available. The clearance of arrears in contributions and raising funds through voluntary contributions would help.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Secretariat of AALCO has shifted to its new headquarters building, provided by the Government of India. The new building is fully equipped to meet the needs of an intergovernmental organization. We hope its modern conference facilities will motivate AALCO to organize more programmes for the benefit of its members. The shifting of the offices of AALCO and the residence of the Secretary-General to their own

new buildings would also partially ease the financial situation.

However, it is a matter of great satisfaction that, despite its financial limitations, the work of the Organization is efficiently organized by a small but dedicated band of international experts working under the guidance of the international diplomatic staff, including its most competent Secretary-General. Its excellent library and facilities deserve to be further improved. In due course, AALCO could operate as an international law documentation centre for the benefit of Asian and African States.

We congratulate the new Secretary-General of AALCO, Mr. Rahmat Mohamad, and hope he will infuse more vitality in the work of AALCO. We also thank the former Secretary-General, Mr. Wafik Kamil, for his immense contribution to the work of AALCO.

We are optimistic that in the years to come AALCO will achieve greater success in clarifying and consolidating the common interests of Asian and African States. It will also surely enhance its activities in training and the dissemination of international law expertise among them. We have no doubt that the cooperation between AALCO and the United Nations will continue to grow stronger. We wish AALCO and its members every success in their future endeavours.

**The Acting President**: I now call on the representative of Albania, who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.9.

**Mr. Dilja** (Albania): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) member States, under sub-item (d) of agenda item 114, the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.9, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization".

Let me stress at the very beginning the importance that all member States of this organization give to that cooperation with the United Nations. Let me also express the appreciation for the valuable support that all countries that have co-sponsored that resolution have given to it.

The draft resolution on BSEC-United Nations cooperation stresses the priorities of the work of BSEC. It will give further impetus to that cooperation, while reiterating the conviction that multilateral economic cooperation contributes to enhancing peace, stability and security. The wider Black Sea is being increasingly transformed into a dynamic area of development, with a growing weight in both the geopolitical and geo-economic aspects.

The wider Black Sea area can edge closer to its neighbours and the world only through concerted efforts and coordinated initiatives by different regional and international organizations. To that effect the selection of the areas of common interest would produce the necessary premises for engineering significant projects for the region. It could also represent one of the most effective ways to ensure the solidification of BSEC as a regional voice, with its full weight and dignity.

Building on experience and the advanced institutional frame, BSEC offers a pragmatic project and a results-oriented approach in the spheres of common interest, thus contributing to improved regional cooperation and beyond, as well as the creation of synergies and an increase in the efficiency of resource use. As an acknowledgment of those qualifications, different actors in the region and beyond have given further attention to BSEC.

The enhanced regional cooperation through BSEC and its interaction with other regional and international organizations, of which the United Nations is among the first, is one of the best ways to effectively address the threats and challenges that lie ahead and is a real contribution to confidence-building in the region and beyond, as a prerequisite to a more peaceful and secure world.

This year, preparation of the draft resolution has taken into consideration the ongoing reform of BSEC aimed at increasing its effectiveness. Also, it serves the purpose of promoting cooperation among members of BSEC and its strategic partners worldwide.

We are convinced that this year's draft resolution will further strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and will contribute to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as well as the statutory goals and objectives of BSEC.

Before I conclude, I would like, on behalf of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, to extend our thanks to all the delegations that contributed to this draft resolution. It is also the hope of the

sponsors that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as in previous years.

**The Acting President**: I call next on the representative of Uruguay, who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.10.

**Mr. Cancela** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is honoured to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.10, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System".

The Latin American Economic System (LAES) is an intergovernmental regional agency made up of 26 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. It was created in 1975 and is headquartered in Caracas, Venezuela. The purpose of LAES is to promote a system of consultation and coordination for the adoption of common positions and strategies on economic matters throughout the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean vis-à-vis groups of nations, forums and international agencies, as well as to boost cooperation and integration among countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

On 27 September 1991, the United Nations and LAES signed a cooperation agreement in which they agreed to strengthen and expand cooperation on topics of common interest. In order to give further impetus to the already fruitful relationship between those two bodies, I now introduce the draft resolution that we trust will receive unanimous support from the Assembly.

**The Acting President**: I call on the representative of Sweden, who will introduce draft resolutions A/63/L.11 and A/63/L.12.

**Mr. Lidén** (Sweden): Sweden, representing the Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), has the honour to introduce a draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization", which is contained in document A/63/L.11.

A political momentum is building up around the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). There is increased attention by the world community to the role of the CTBT in nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation, which continue to be among the most important challenges facing humankind today. We all know the importance of the CTBT for the overall non-proliferation regime, raising the threshold for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, preventing a qualitative arms race and building confidence through an effective verification system. Positive developments regarding ratification of the Treaty would furthermore give important impetus to the review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2010.

The CTBT has been signed by 180 States and ratified by 145 of them. Only nine so-called Annex 2 States remain to ratify the Treaty in order for it to enter into force. The Treaty's verification regime is now well advanced in its build-up. More than 80 per cent of the International Monitoring System stations have been certified or constructed. An international scientific studies project is under way to monitor the progress of the verification regime. The verification regime thus seems to be ready for the Treaty to enter into force soon.

The coming period will be a defining one for the Treaty's future. Sweden was among the very first nations to sign and ratify the CTBT and has made a consistent contribution to furthering it. Therefore we feel a special responsibility and have steadfastly supported the efforts of our partners and the CTBTO Preparatory Commission in promoting the Treaty. In that regard, we welcome recent ratifications of the Treaty by States and call on other States to follow that lead. We also appreciate the work of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and its Executive Secretary and the efforts of the Provisional Technical Secretariat. We call on all delegations to support the draft resolution.

Let me now turn to the second draft resolution that I have the honour to introduce today. This time I do so because of Sweden's current chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The resolution is entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe" and is contained in document A/63/L.12.

The draft resolution demonstrates the wide range of areas where the United Nations and the Council of Europe cooperate and where the Council's activities contribute to furthering the goals of the United Nations. The first draft of the resolution was prepared by the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg. We have

conducted informal consultations with United Nations Member States, and I wish to thank all delegations for their constructive and cooperative approach to the consultations.

With the changes that were agreed during the consultation process, I hope that the text before us here today will be adopted by consensus. In addition to the 33 countries that appear as sponsors in document A/63/L.12, the following countries have also joined as sponsors: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malta, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

**The Acting President**: I call on the representative of Belarus, who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.13.

**Mr. Dapkiunas** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): It is my great honour, on behalf of the member States of the Eurasian Economic Community — the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan — to present draft resolution A/63/L.13 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Eurasian Economic Community.

The Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC) was created in 2000. Since 2003 it has enjoyed observer status in the General Assembly, and it closely cooperates with agencies of the United Nations system. With the objective of strengthening the institutional framework of that cooperation, in September 2006 a memorandum of understanding was signed between EURASEC and the United Nations Development Programme. In January 2007, a cooperation agreement between the EURASEC Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe was concluded.

Last year the General Assembly adopted its first resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Eurasian Economic Community (resolution 62/79), which was based on strengthening cooperation between the organizations and reinforcing the practical links.

The draft resolution submitted for the Assembly's consideration is prepared on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the first resolution on cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Community and the United Nations in such fields as the management of water resources, energy and technology transfer (see A/63/228, paras. 67-70). The draft also invites continued cooperation between the two organizations.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to convey my gratitude to the sponsors of the resolution and all delegations that took part in the consultations and contributed towards the agreement on the text of the resolution.

**Mr. Del Picchia** (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Montenegro and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The development of the regional integration process is one of the essential factors that have contributed to economic development and the maintenance of peace and security throughout the world. It is only natural that such development should go hand in hand with improved cooperation with the United Nations.

The EU is among the most ambitious and successful examples of regional integration. By strengthening the solidarity among its members and implementing its policies throughout the Union, the EU has successfully bridged divides and promoted prosperity within its borders. The role played and the competencies exercised by the EU are fully in keeping with the spirit of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which encourages cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations in accordance, of course, with the purposes and principles of the Charter, in particular the pre-eminence of the Security Council in the area of peacekeeping.

The European Union has supported the objective of mutual strengthening between the United Nations and regional organizations. As stressed in the European Security Strategy, adopted in 2003 — which we intend to update before the end of the year — one of the EU's priorities is to strengthen the United Nations and equip

it with the means it needs to shoulder its responsibilities and undertake effective action.

On the basis of the 2003 and 2007 EU-United Nations joint declarations, the cooperation between the EU and the Organization in the areas of crisis management and security has developed significantly in recent years, particularly through the launching of EU operations, within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy, to support United Nations peacekeeping operations. We have made that a priority of the French presidency of the European Union. EU ministers raised the issue at a seminar held in New York on 26 September, attended by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon; Mr. Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy; and Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations. Furthermore, from 20 to 22 October in Paris, we held the first meeting of the International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, on cooperation between the EU and the United Nations as an example of partnership under Chapter VIII of the Charter. Many representatives of major regional organizations, including the African Union, participated. In addition to the realm of security, the EU has lent constant support to the United Nations in the areas of humanitarian and development assistance and the defence and promotion of human rights.

The European Union attaches great importance to the development of other examples of regional integration throughout the world. It has long been developing institutional ties with various regional organizations and promotes the strengthening of those organizations particularly through its development policy. In particular, it welcomes the role played by many regional and subregional bodies in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The European Union welcomes the strengthening of the ties between regional organizations and institutions and the United Nations, as one can see from reading the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/228), and continues to attach great importance to the framework provided by Security Council resolution 1631 (2005), on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In particular, the European Union supports close cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of crisis management on the African continent. In that regard, it welcomes the Secretary-General's establishment of an EU-United Nations panel to assess modalities of support for regional peace operations carried out under United Nations mandates.

The European Union encourages close cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The cooperation among the United Nations, the OSCE and the EU during the Georgian conflict and their co-chairmanship of the international discussions in Geneva demonstrate the potential of such cooperation in crisis management and conflict settlement. The three organizations are also jointly engaged in Kosovo.

The European Union also welcomes the development of cooperation between the United Nations system and the Council of Europe, in particular in the areas of intercultural dialogue, child protection, combating violence against women, protecting refugees and promoting human rights education. The Council of Europe is the best example of the very positive role that a regional organization can play in protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In addition, the European Union attaches great importance to the rapprochement between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), which represents one third of the States with seats in the General Assembly and is increasingly asserting itself as a political force on the international scene. The EU notes with satisfaction the increased cooperation between the two organizations in the area of peacekeeping, as illustrated by the participation of the Secretary-General, together with some 40 heads of State or Government of French-speaking countries, in the Quebec summit held from 17 to 19 October this year and by the holding in April of a joint United Nations-OIF seminar on cooperation in the areas of early warning and conflict prevention.

Thus, together with the Secretary-General, the OIF is working to build French-speaking capacities within the framework of peacekeeping operations. The OIF does not seek to duplicate United Nations activities, but rather to carry out supplementary ones in consultation with the Secretary-General, relying on the

intrinsic added value of multilateral Francophone capacities.

It is not only regional organizations that can help the United Nations to attain Charter objectives. In that connection, the European Union particularly commends the role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and welcomes the growing cooperation between it and the United Nations. Given the essential role played by national parliaments in defining national policies, we believe it essential that parliamentarians of various countries be increasingly better informed about ongoing developments at the United Nations. Furthermore, the United Nations, like the agencies within it, must work in ever closer cooperation with parliaments to improve the assessment of States' international commitments in drafting legislation and national budgets.

The European Union therefore supports the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report, in particular that the outcome document of the annual parliamentary hearing of the IPU at the United Nations be distributed as an official United Nations document. The next hearing will take place on 20 and 21 November.

Finally, the European Union, of course, strongly supports broadening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and works tirelessly to promote universal ratification of the Treaty. The same applies to cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which might be further increased, in particular in relation to the OPCW's efforts — like those of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) — to combat chemical terrorism.

The European Union believes that good coordination between regional and other organizations, on the one hand, and the United Nations, on the other, can strengthen United Nations action, whether in the area of economic development, security or the promotion of human rights.

For all those reasons, the European Union looks forward to actively participating in the coming days in formulating draft resolutions under General Assembly agenda item 114.

**Mr. Talbot** (Guyana): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), on agenda item 114 (e), entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community". It is my first duty to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report that he has presented (A/63/228) to facilitate our consideration of the item.

I am proud to assert that CARICOM is a family that is close-knit by ties of geography, culture and history. But that closeness never obscures in our minds our membership also in a wider community — a global community that is desperately in need of a global order that draws its inspiration from nowhere else but the Charter of the United Nations. However fragile, however fractured that order may be at present, our world would be a dark and dreary place without the light offered by the United Nations Charter along our path to a peaceful, just and habitable planet. Hence the importance of cooperation with the United Nations and of giving effect to the principles contained in its Charter.

What is more, we in CARICOM have a number of shared interests and goals, and we face basically the same kinds of challenges. Like any other family, we endeavour to seek ways to strengthen our unity of action to meet our common needs and goals. Basically, we are prepared, as far as it is possible, to seek solutions to the challenges facing us all.

But there are naturally some problems that will not be solved by our own collective self-help efforts, however hard we may try. Some require cooperation that is much deeper, much wider and more varied than we can ever forge within our own subregion. That is another area where the United Nations becomes so important to us. In this Organization, we feel ourselves to be a family within a family. The consideration of the question of cooperation with the United Nations provides an opportunity for us to focus afresh on the bonds and the many commonalities that exist between us and the Organization, what our cooperation has achieved and what it still needs to achieve. Much of that we will detail in a draft resolution that we intend to present for the consideration of this Assembly.

For those reasons, therefore, when I ascended to this podium, it was not simply because the date and the time for this item had come. More fundamentally, it was to show once again the deep commitment of CARICOM to the objectives and goals of the United Nations and to outline our vision of the place of

CARICOM-United Nations cooperation in the wider polity.

CARICOM is a community which, for the most part, is comprised of small island and low-lying coastal developing States, all facing peculiar sustainable development challenges arising therefrom. For us, the effects of climate change are an overwhelming and enduring concern. As members of the wider family, we therefore feel entitled to look to the United Nations for recognition of the vulnerabilities to which our special status exposes us and for the establishment of a corresponding regime of solidarity and cooperation.

We are pleased that, following the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the Final Document of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, our case was robustly sustained by the Organization in the adoption of resolution 61/197, which, inter alia, expressed unequivocal support for the efforts of the CARICOM States to have the Caribbean Sea designated as a special area in the context of sustainable development.

More specifically, in the area of climate change, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and, in particular, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama, have facilitated a number of environmental initiatives, most recently the promotion of the multilateral environmental agreement project between UNEP, the European Community and African, Caribbean and Pacific States, which seeks to build the capacity of CARICOM member States to meet their obligations under a selected set of multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. UNEP is also working with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and the CARICOM secretariat in ensuring that the region is updated on preparations for the Copenhagen climate change conference.

In the area of food security, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been active in the region in promoting the nexus between food security, climate change, sustainable development and agriculture in the Caribbean. FAO continues to maintain an amicable, mutually beneficial and sustainable relationship with the Caribbean Community in general. That relationship covers a wide range of activities in the agricultural sector, including promoting food security through the Regional Programme for Food Security. FAO has also been responsive to the current rise in food prices and the resulting negative consequences it poses to the region. It has provided in excess of $1.25 million in direct grant assistance distributed among CARICOM member States, with Haiti being treated separately. Those funds have been used to help small-scale farm production input resources, including seeds, fertilizer, chemicals and tools, by assisting member States in implementing a project on soaring food prices and in developing sustainable strategies in the economic production of food.

The Caribbean Community has benefited tremendously over the years from development assistance made available by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) over a succession of programming cycles and, within the past decade, under successive regional cooperation frameworks. The Community has thereby received much valued technical training, advisory and operational assistance provided to CARICOM member States, the CARICOM secretariat and other CARICOM institutions with region-wide mandates and responsibilities.

The esteem in which UNDP is held in its relations with the Community is a function not merely of the quantum or variety of resources we have received over the years, but also of the strategic, substantive and truly development-oriented nature of the assistance granted and the responsiveness of the Programme to CARICOM needs and priorities.

CARICOM States are also the beneficiaries, in a number of areas critical to our development, of a network of relations of functional cooperation with several other funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including UNICEF, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Population Fund. We greatly value those relationships, and look forward to their continuation and intensification.

CARICOM's cooperation with the United Nations happily maintains a dynamic character, including bilateral and multilateral consultations, focus groups, memorandums of understanding and other working agreements, information-sharing, joint programme development and continuous interaction, which allow us to address issues as soon as they arise and help prevent stasis. The highest level of those

consultations is the general meeting between the United Nations system and the Caribbean Community and its associated institutions.

The meeting is usually organized by the Department of Political Affairs, with which CARICOM representatives naturally maintain a close and productive working relationship. Preparations are currently in train for the fifth general meeting, which is due to take place in New York in January 2009. CARICOM States are looking forward to that meeting, at which we expect the heads of regional agencies to be represented. On that occasion, in addition to giving voice to our own concerns regarding the state of cooperation with the Organization, including our dissatisfaction at the closure of the Caribbean Regional Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Barbados, we will also be looking forward to joining the Secretariat in constructing with us a shared vision of a regime of cooperation that is fully consistent with the realities and challenges of the rapidly evolving international context.

The various development efforts to which I have referred naturally require, for their successful implementation and maintenance, an overarching umbrella of security. So vital is the field of security that it was officially included as the fourth pillar of the Caribbean integration process, joining the three pre-existing priority pillars of human and social development, trade and economic integration and foreign policy coordination. Even as the Community strengthens its security arrangements and makes every effort to fulfil its international security commitments, it looks to the United Nations and its relevant specialized agencies, including UNODC, to support its efforts. We are pleased that UNODC has recommenced work in the Caribbean in concert with the relevant regional counterparts. However, we reiterate the region's call for the reopening of the UNODC Office in the Caribbean.

More generally, we have found in the United Nations — both at the level of the Secretariat and that of the Assembly at large — a framework within which we can maximize the benefits of cooperation in those areas where we consider the potential threats to be greatest. I refer to our active contributions to the global effort for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and also towards the conclusion of an arms trade treaty, among other initiatives.

The special challenges faced by our sister State of Haiti have also provided occasion for mutual cooperation between CARICOM and the United Nations. We wish to place on record here our gratitude and appreciation through the work being done through the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). CARICOM recognizes the sacrifices made and the support that continues to be extended to MINUSTAH by countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as other parts of the globe. We welcome the adoption on 14 October of resolution 1840 (2008), by which the Security Council extended the mandate of MINUSTAH by one year, thereby assuring the maintenance of critical international support for Haiti at this time when it continues to be tested. In our view, it is vital that MINUSTAH's mandate remain adequate to the evolving realities and needs of the situation in Haiti.

Finally, in our cooperation with the United Nations, CARICOM States see, beyond the satisfaction of our interests as a regional collectivity, the need for a wider service to the international community and the need to help ensure that the high and lofty principles of the Charter do not remain just that — high and lofty principles — but that we also do our part to secure their attainment and their consistent fulfilment. It is that vision that propels our active participation in the dialogue on issues as varied as reform of the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, and so on. In that way, we believe, we are helping to create an Organization that is modern, responsive, democratic and outward-looking and that encourages and truly strengthens faith in the principle of international organization. In the final analysis, we believe that it is in our actions in those disparate areas that we engage in the most practical cooperation with the United Nations.

**Mr. Salguiero** (Portugal): On behalf of the States members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) — Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste — I have the honour to speak on item 114 (f), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries".

Since CPLP was granted observer status to the United Nations in 1999, it has engaged in multiple activities that complement and support the work of the Organization in the realms of political coordination, facilitation, mediation, electoral assistance, institution-rebuilding, and the promotion of development and cooperation in cultural and social areas.

In the two years since the adoption of resolution 61/223, under Guinea-Bissau's chairmanship of CPLP the Community's relations with the United Nations system have developed and strengthened in an impressive manner, proving to be mutually advantageous. I will highlight just a few concrete examples of existing initiatives and partnerships.

CPLP and the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are jointly organizing workshops for journalists on reporting on elections and on HIV/AIDS prevention.

On 25 April 2008, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Executive Secretariat of CPLP and the Portuguese unit of United Nations Radio regarding exchange of information and cooperation on the promotion of journalistic content to a Portuguese-speaking audience and with a view to organizing initiatives to promote cultural diversity within Portuguese-speaking countries.

Last May, a technical cooperation project was signed by the CPLP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, aimed at the formulation of a South-South/North-South cooperation programme for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

A cooperation agreement between the International Fund for Agricultural Development and CPLP, signed in November 2007, will intensify the fight against rural poverty in Portuguese-speaking developing countries.

A partnership between CPLP, the International Labour Organization and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, supported by the Brazilian and Portuguese Governments, led to the holding of a training course on combating child labour in the Portuguese-speaking countries in December 2006.

CPLP is also preparing the launching of a lusophone education network, in partnership with the World Bank, aimed at accelerating the response of the educational sector in member States to the HIV/AIDS pandemics.

Those actions, among others, described in the report of the CPLP to the General Assembly, transmitted in document A/63/343, and in the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations, contained in document A/63/228, demonstrate the engagement of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries in multilateral actions initiated by the United Nations towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and addressing the effects of climate change.

In accordance with the pertinent dispositions of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage regional cooperation for the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries has also reached cooperation agreements with a number of regional, subregional and intergovernmental organizations, including the African Union, the Council of Europe, the Economic Community of West African States and the International Organization of la Francophonie. A memorandum of understanding with the European Commission was signed in November 2007, which we expect to be the basis for great improvements in the multilateral CPLP cooperation framework.

At the seventh CPLP summit held in Lisbon on 25 July 2008, the heads of State and Government recalled the far-reaching importance of sharing a language spoken today by over 250 million people in eight countries and four continents, and reached a political commitment to promote the Portuguese language in the international community, including in international and regional organizations and United Nations agencies and programmes. The promotion of Portuguese as a global language and CPLP's contribution to peace, regional stability and food security were the main topics of the summit and are the main priorities of the current two-year Portuguese chairmanship of CPLP.

The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries supports the work of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has been actively chaired by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Maria Luiza Viotti, and in whose deliberations CPLP and all its member States are proud to participate. The

Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries is also assisting Guinea-Bissau's current electoral process, in particular in the deployment of an election observation mission.

In Timor-Leste, CPLP and its member States are deeply committed to strengthening State institutions and are working as prominent partners with the United Nations and the Timorese authorities in efforts to consolidate peace and promote development.

In the coming days, the States members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries will introduce a draft resolution under agenda item 114 stressing the progress achieved in the cooperation between CPLP, United Nations agencies and other bodies and programmes, and encouraging the establishment of a formal cooperation agreement between the secretariats of both organizations. I thank in advance all Member States that may wish to offer their support and sponsorship.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*